



Inter Milan striker Samuel Eto'o takes a shot during their Serie A tie against Bari at San Siro on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP

## Bari hold Inter

AFP, Rome



Defending champions Inter Milan were held to a surprise 1-1 draw at home to promoted Bari at the San Siro on Sunday in their first match of the new Serie A season.

But rivals Juventus got off to a winning start as Vincenzo Iaquinta scored the only goal in a 1-0 home success against Chievo.

Cameron forward Samuel Eto'o scored his first goal for Inter since joining from Barcelona in a swap deal that saw Zlatan Ibrahimovic head to Spain, but Vitaly Kutuzov's equaliser earned the plucky Serie A newcomers a deserved share of the spoils.

Inter coach Jose Mourinho picked new signings Eto'o and Diego Milito up front together but they could not fire the champions to victory.

"We have the quality to do well, we played a great game but we didn't have the luck needed to score a second goal and make the game safe," moaned the Portuguese boss.

"Unfortunately, we lack a bit of fluidity, we haven't had long to work together.

"We're not a team that makes excuses and I don't want to justify the loss of two points but it's a fact that we've changed a lot and we're lacking fluidity."

Inter were creating little in the early stages and survived a scare at the other end when France captain Patrick Vieira's clumsy challenge brought down Riccardo Allegretti right on the edge of the box.

Allegretti curled the free-kick over the wall but Julio Cesar was quickly across his line to make the save.

Vieira then played a sublime ball over the top of the defence for Milito, who couldn't keep his volley down.

Mourinho was clearly unhappy with what he saw and switched things around before the half hour was even up, bringing on Mario Balotelli for Sulley Muntari and changing the formation to 4-3-3 from a 4-4-2 with a midfield diamond.

However, the coach then revealed that the switch was probably more due to Ramadan than tactical.

"Muntari had some problems related to Ramadan, perhaps with this heat it's not good for him to be doing this (fasting)," said Mourinho about Sulley's substitution.

Another new signing Thiago Motta shot inches wide from just outside the area but Inter centre-backs Lucio and Marco Materazzi got in each other's way to allow Kutuzov a run clean through on goal, only for the Belarus international to tread on the ball and lose momentum.

Mourinho changed things again at the break, bringing winger Ricardo Quaresma on for his defensive midfielder Vieira and reverting to a 4-4-2 with wide men.

The move was soon to pay dividends, although in controversial fashion as Milito slumped to the ground in the box from what seemed to be minimal contact.

The referee pointed to the penalty spot and Eto'o easily opened his account in Italian football.

He should have had a second on 67 minutes when Milito teed him up inside the box but with only goalkeeper Jean-Francois Gillet to beat the former Barcelona man dragged his shot hopelessly wide.

They were made to pay for that on 74 minutes following a defensive blunder from Lucio, who charged out of position to try to make an interception, only to leave a gaping hole for Kutuzov to shoot past Cesar.

In Turin, Iaquinta gave Juve an 11th minute lead when he rose highest to brilliantly head home a free-kick from debutant Diego.

Iaquinta almost scored a second with a close range header from an Amauri cross but Stefano Sorrentino made an instinctive save with his legs.

Amauri came closest in the second half to adding a second but his shot came back off the post.

In other games Parma were denied a winning return to Serie A as an Antonio Di Natale brace earned Udinese a 2-2 draw.

Giuseppe Biava scored seven minutes from time to give Genoa a 3-2 victory over AS Roma.

### IN BRIEF

#### Football turns violent

AFP, Kolkata

A 19-year-old spectator was shot dead and a holiday resort set alight in India as furious supporters of a losing amateur football team went on the rampage, police said.

Violence erupted after the tournament held near the eastern city of Kolkata on Sunday when one side was defeated in the final in a penalty shoot-out.

"Associates of the losing team threw bombs and sprayed bullets in and around the football ground after a heated altercation with organisers and the winning team," police superintendent Rahul Srivastava said.

"The team that lost the final was sponsored by a local troublemaker," he said, adding a 19-year-old had died at the ground after a bullet hit him in the chest.

Supporters of the defeated team then fled to a nearby holiday resort, where they clashed with local villagers, and several holiday cottages were set alight, one witness told AFP.

"We were in the dining hall when a ball of fire raged towards us," resort guest Santi Ranjan Pal said. "I rushed out with my family, leaving my car behind."

Police said 15 people had been arrested.

#### Ghezal unable to fast

AFP, Rome

Practising Muslim Abdelkader Ghezal celebrated the start of Ramadan, his religion's holy month of fasting, with a goal in Siena's 2-1 home to defeat to AC Milan but then admitted he would not be able to fulfill his religious obligations.

During the month of Ramadan, practising Muslims fast between daylight hours abstaining not only from food but also drink, including water.

Such a practice is made that much tougher in the summer months in Europe when the days are longer than in Arabia, where the religion was founded, and humidity as well as temperature creeps up.

Much of Italy is currently experiencing temperatures between 35 and 40 degrees Celsius while sunset is at around 6.30am and sun-down not until around 8pm.

That means a Muslim would have to fast for more than 13 hours and for a professional sportsman that challenge becomes even harder.

And Ghezal, who was born in France to Algerian parents but plays his international football for the African country, admitted that for him it simply would not be possible to play to his maximum potential if he were to observe Ramadan.

## Hamburg stun Wolves

AFP, Berlin



Defending champions VfL Wolfsburg slumped to a shock 4-2 defeat at home to Hamburg on Sunday to leave Leverkusen top of the Bundesliga, while German giants Bayern Munich were humbled by Mainz.

Hamburg raced into an early 2-0 lead after Wolfsburg goalkeeper Diego Benaglio conceded an own goal three minutes into the game before Dutch midfielder Eljero Elia netted the second after just seven minutes.

The champions fought back in style and equalised with playmaker Zvezdan Misimovic pulling a goal back on 52 minutes before setting up Nigerian striker Obafemi Martins' header in the 56th minute.

But Hamburg were not to be denied and Croatia striker Mladen Petric put his side back in the lead on 75 minutes before Dutch midfielder Romeo Castelen scored the fourth right on the stroke of full-time.

"They way we presented ourselves in the first half has nothing to do with Bundesliga football," fumed Wolfsburg coach Armin Veh.

"We were terrible in defence and Hamburg deserved the win.

"They were the best team for 90 minutes, were more aggressive and created more chances."

The defeat - Wolfsburg's first in the league

since May - leaves the Wolves fourth while Hamburg climb to second behind Leverkusen, who stay top on goal difference having hammered Freiburg 5-0 on Saturday.

"I said at the break that we needed to put them under far more pressure and to get to 3-0 as fast as possible," said Hamburg coach Bruno Labbadia.

"That did not happen, which makes our reaction at 2-2 even more fantastic."

Elsewhere, Werder Bremen striker Claudio Pizarro marked his return to the Bundesliga since rejoining the north German club from Chelsea with two goals on Sunday in the 3-0 win over Borussia Moenchengladbach to leaves his club seventh in the league.

And Hertha Berlin ended a week to forget when they slumped to a 1-0 defeat at VfL Bochum which was their third reversal in a week.

On Saturday, Bayern Munich were humbled 2-1 by promoted minnows Mainz as goals from Andreas Ivanschitz and Aristide Bance put the home side 2-0 up at half-time before Mainz's Nikolas Noveski scored an own goal.

Bayer Leverkusen went top of the table after three games when they hammered Freiburg 5-0 as Swiss striker Eren Derdiyok and midfielder Tranquillo Barnetta both scored two goals.

Hanover's Czech Republic striker Jiri Stajner scored twice and missed a penalty in his side's 2-0 win over Nuremberg while Cologne were held 0-0 by Frankfurt as Stuttgart drew 1-1 at Dortmund.

## Burnley scalp Everton

AFP, Burnley

Burnley's fairytale start to life in the Premier League continued on Sunday as Wade Elliott's goal earned a 1-0 victory over Everton.

Owen Coyle's team marked their first home match in the English top-flight for 33 years by beating reigning champions Manchester United 1-0 in midweek and Everton suffered the same fate in front of another vociferous full house at Turf Moor.

The Clarets, promoted via the Championship play-offs last season, took the lead through Elliott's first half strike and wrapped up their second win in three matches after Everton striker Louis Saha missed a second half penalty.

Saha's blunder left Everton without a single point from their first two league matches, while Burnley are flying high in seventh place.

## Everton agree Lescott fee

AFP, Liverpool

Everton on Sunday confirmed they have agreed a fee with English Premier League rivals Manchester City for the sale of defender Joleon Lescott, bringing to an end a bitter, summer-long saga.

The England international is expected to undergo a medical on Monday after City finally matched the Merseysiders' valuation of 24 million pounds.

Earlier, Everton manager David Moyes took a final swipe at City over the affair.

Asked after his side's 1-0 defeat at Burnley on Sunday if the Lescott deal was well advanced Moyes said: "If they (City) say they are quite far on I'm sure they are."

"But we shouldn't have been asked to wait this length of time for an amount of cash we think was the correct value for the player."

## Messi fires Barcelona

AFP, Barcelona

Lionel Messi scored twice as Barcelona beat Athletic Bilbao 3-0 in the Spanish Super Cup second leg on Sunday for a 5-1 aggregate win.

The European champions dominated the match and could have won by more.

Argentine star Messi scored in the 50th minute and added a second from the penalty spot in the 68th.

New Swedish striker Zlatan Ibrahimovic settled well and it was his pass which created Messi's opener. Bojan Krkic added the third goal shortly after coming on as a substitute.

Barcelona had five decent chances to score in the first half with Thierry Henry, Messi, Xavi, Gerard Pique and Ibrahimovic all going close.



PHOTO: AFP

Barcelona star Lionel Messi celebrates his goal during their Spanish Supercup clash against Athletic Bilbao at Nou Camp on Sunday.

## Blues ease past Fulham

AFP, London



Chelsea maintained their perfect start to life under Carlo Ancelotti with a comfortable 2-0 victory over Fulham on Sunday.

Ancelotti cut a contented figure at Craven Cottage after his side cruised home against their west London rivals thanks to goals in either half from Didier Drogba and Nicolas Anelka.

The triumph put Chelsea into second place in the English Premier League table behind Tottenham, but of more significance to Ancelotti will have been the nonchalant manner of the performance.

Chelsea were almost completely untroubled by Roy Hodgson's team, who badly missed the injured Andy Johnson, and this display - characterised by doughty defending and lethal finishing - sent an ominous message to their title rivals.

Ancelotti's satisfaction will have been compounded by the fact that Fulham are a side that traditionally revel in bloodying the noses of the top flight's elite, and Chelsea have suffered more than most.

The Blues had won just three of their previous seven encounters with their near neighbours: hardly a catastrophic record, but not exactly glittering, so the visitors would have been forgiven a little wariness.

That showed in the opening stages, when neither side took the game by the throat.

Fulham, who handed a debut to Republic of Ireland winger Damien Duff, were predictably high-octane, snappy in the tackle and eager to hurry their glitzy opponents at every opportunity, and while they delivered precious little as an attacking force, Chelsea were largely neutered.

Instead, they were restricted to half-

chances. Michael Ballack propelled a free-kick harmlessly over the crossbar from an inviting position five yards just outside the penalty area - much to the disgust of Frank Lampard, who had appeared the more likely taker - while moments later John Obi Mikel skimmed a 20-yarder two yards wide of the post.

But patience has been a feature of the early Ancelotti era and, just as in their previous league outings this season, their wait was rewarded again when they finally cracked Fulham's resolve with a neatly worked goal in the 39th minute.

The architect was Anelka, the striker splitting the hosts' central defensive pairing of Aaron Hughes and Brede Hangeland with a beautifully weighted pass.

Drogba, having curved his run to perfection, took the ball in his stride and clipped his shot into the corner.

Fulham were angry at the referee's assistant for failing to intervene then but they were grateful moments later, when Drogba was set clear by a delicious pass from Lampard, only for the flag to be raised. Replays suggested the 31-year-old had once again timed his run to the split-second.

Hodgson hardly had the manpower to instigate sweeping changes, so Chelsea remained largely unruffled after the interval.

Drogba might have had a second goal when his angled snap-shot on the turn was smartly saved by Mark Schwarzer, while Lampard dragged wide from a similar position moments later.

That might have briefly reinvigorated Fulham's hopes of an unlikely point but they were snuffed out in the 76th minute.

A slide-rule pass from Drogba picked a path through Fulham's back-line and Anelka rounded Schwarzer and rolled in his first goal of the season.

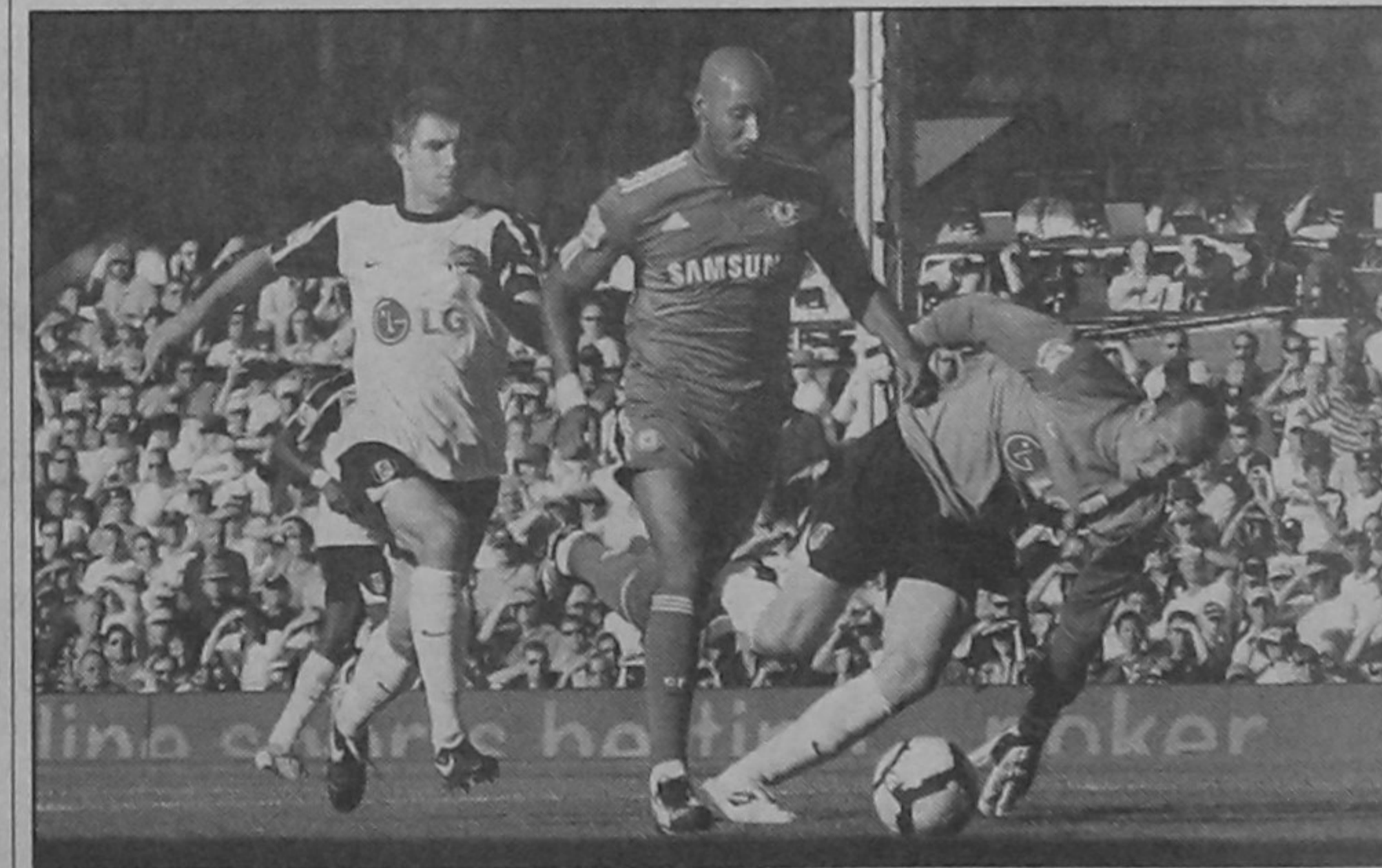


PHOTO: AFP

Chelsea striker Nicolas Anelka (C) scores the second goal past Fulham goalkeeper Mark Schwarzer (R) during their Premier League encounter at Craven Cottage on Sunday.

## Harry eyes top four

AFP, London



Tottenham manager Harry Redknapp believes his side are ready to nail down a place in the Premier League's top four after making their best start to a season for 49 years.

Aaron Lennon's late strike at West Ham on Sunday sealed a 2-1 victory that extended Tottenham's winning run to three matches and put them top of the table.

It is the fastest opening to a league campaign from a Spurs team since the 1960-61 side that won the league and FA Cup double.

Redknapp refused to compare his current crop to Bill Nicholson's celebrated team, but he feels his side have a chance of creating their own history and pushing for a place in the Champions League.

"Nine points is a great start for us," Redknapp said. "But I wouldn't even compare ourselves to the '61 or '62 team. That was an amazing football team."

They had Bill Nicholson as manager, Dave

Mackay and Danny Blanchflower playing for them. Dave Mackay was like three men, not one.

"We've got some good players, but they had a great team and were fantastic. That was a special time in the club's history, a long time ago. If we are anywhere as good as them, we'll be okay."

"Who knows what we can achieve? I'm not saying we'll finish in the top four, but we have good quality and we'll give it a go."

"It could be open this year. Manchester City will certainly be pushing to be a top-four team, and there's no reason we can't push."

"We've won two away games already. If our home form stands up, we'll be right up there."

Redknapp's men had to come from a goal behind after Carlton Cole unleashed a 25-yard volley which crashed past Carlo Cudicini four minutes after the break.

Cole turned from hero to villain five minutes later when his backpass led to Jermain Defoe levelling, a sweet goal for the former Hammers striker who was jeered by the home fans.

The winner came 11 minutes from time after Jonathan Spector's slip allowed Lennon to cut inside and drive past Robert Green.